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ABSTRACT

These four papers were presented at a symposium on action learning moderated by Lex Dilworth at the 1996 conference of the Academy of Human Resource Development. "Developing an Infrastructure for Individual and Organizational Change: Transfer of Learning from an Action Reflection Learning (ARL) Program" (ARL Inquiry) reports findings from a study of a management development intervention called Action Reflection Learning (ARL). "Using Organizational Learning in an Action Research Intervention to Maintain Critical Technical Knowledge and Skills" (Deborah Duarte, David Schwandt) describes an organizational diagnosis and action research intervention that was guided by a model of organizational learning to identify and disseminate skills of National Aeronautics and Space Administration engineers. In the third paper, "Organizational Learning as Culture Construction" (ARL Inquiry), a theoretical model derived from field study data of an intervention performed with a multinational corporation attempting to develop globalization is described. "A Study of the Role of Learning Advisors in Action Learning" (Judy O'Neil) reports on the first phase of research in which some of the external and internal influences on a learning advisor are examined. Papers contain references. (KC)

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SYMPOSIUM
[2] ACTION LEARNING

Chair: Lex Dilworth, Virginia Commonwealth University

Developing an Infrastructure for Individual and Organizational Change: Transfer of Learning from an Action Reflection Learning™ Program
ARL™ Inquiry

Using Organizational Learning in an Action Research Intervention to Maintain Critical Technical Knowledge and Skills
Deborah Duarte, George Washington University
David Schwandt, George Washington University

Organizational Learning as Culture Construction
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A Study of the Role of Learning Advisors in Action Learning
Judy O'Neil

Academy of Human Resource Development
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Developing an Infrastructure for Individual and Organizational Change: Transfer of Learning from an Action Reflection Learning™ Program

ARL™ Inquiry[1]

Transfer of learning gains is a key issue for individual and organizational change. We report findings from a study of a management development intervention called Action Reflection Learning™: the learning that takes place within the program, and the extent to which learning is transferred after the program. This program design involves work in small teams on real, strategic business problems. While the program develops an infrastructure supportive of individual and organizational change, the larger organizational context still greatly influences transfer success.

Transfer of learning gains to the workplace has been a constant struggle in the field of HRD (Medsker & Roberts, 1992). Learning strategies that embed real problems into the training design purport to circumvent some of these difficulties because learning occurs *in* the workplace rather than *outside* of it. In other words, as participants face an actual challenge, they are able to recognize and deal with the contextual realities that often make transfer of training difficult when the examples on which participants practice are simplified for the sake of ease of learning new knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Moreover, when real challenges are the focus of the learning, participants must engage other members of the workplace in resolving issues, and must encounter and deal with policies, practices, or systems that otherwise make transfer of training difficult.

In this paper we examine individual learning gains from an Action Reflection Learning™ program, a management development approach that designs learning around real-world challenges, and the extent to which learning has been transferred to the workplace. We start with a brief description of Action Reflection Learning™ (ARL™) and the program being researched, followed by a discussion of the research methodology. We then describe findings that elucidate the following questions:

- What kind of learning takes place within this program ?
- To what extent does that learning transfer back to the workplace?

We conclude with a discussion of insights gained about the value added that might or might not be gained from this kind of a program with respect to developing an infrastructure for individual and organizational change.

Definitions and Context

Detailed definitions and descriptions of Action Reflection Learning™ can be found elsewhere (e.g. O'Neil and Marsick, 1994; Marsick and Cederholm, 1988), as is also the case for definitions and descriptions of Action Learning, of which ARL™ is a variant (e.g. McGill and Beaty, 1992; Pedler, 1992; Revans, 1982). A definition of Action Learning from McGill and Beaty (1992) that we used last year in the AHRD proceedings (ARL™ Inquiry, 1995) captures its essence:

> Action learning is a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with an intention of getting things done. Through action learning individuals learn with and from each other by working on real problems and reflecting on their own experiences. The process helps us to take an active stance toward life and helps to overcome the tendency to think, feel and be passive toward the pressures of life. (p. 17)

Action Reflection Learning™ is aligned with this definition. The Institute for Leadership in

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[1] ARL™ Inquiry is a research group affiliated with Leadership in International Management Ltd. Lyle Yorks, Eastern Connecticut State University; Victoria J. Marsick, Teachers College, Columbia University; and Judy O'Neil, Adjunct, Teachers College, Columbia University took leadership for this article based on data that were collected by Lyle Yorks and that were jointly analyzed with Glen Nilson, Eastern Connecticut State University, and Robert Kolodny, Adjunct, New School for Social Research.

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International Management (LIM) and its sister agency, Management Institute in Lund, Sweden (MiL) have developed some specialized approaches that emphasize facilitated critical reflection and large systems organizational change. ARL™ programs are also typically designed so that a team works together on a common problem, whereas in Action Learning, individuals often work in peer groups on each person's individual challenge.

In a typical ARL™ program, four to five small teams each address a strategically driven business question as the core focus of the program. Teams meet separately to work on their projects, as well as together for whole community activities, during four, one week residential sessions held over a six to nine month period. Pre-scheduled workshops on topics related to an overarching program theme are also part of the program offering. In between scheduled sessions, managers go back to their normal routines, although they are responsible for continuing work on their project teams in between each of the residential sessions.

Each team is assigned a Project Team Advisor (PTA) to facilitate the learning of the team and its members. PTAs work with a Program Director to design the program, and to continually adjust it based on emerging issues being faced within the teams. In addition, just-in-time learning sessions are held with teams or as an entire community. Insofar as possible, PTAs are role models. They illustrate new behaviors that the organization wants managers to adopt. There is no one way in which leaders function who learn through the Action Reflection Learning™ process. However, an early study of the kind of behaviors that managers in MiL programs took back to their work (Marsick in Marsick and Watkins, 1990) suggests that by and large, the process itself instills behaviors that are compatible with participatory management, empowerment of employees, and the leader as coach. Managers learn the value of considering group process along with task behaviors, of listening to their employees and valuing diverse perspectives, of continually raising fresh questions that expand their viewpoints, and of taking the time to learn from successes and mistakes.

The PTA models reflective learning, which is at times "critical" in that deep questions are asked about underlying assumptions that cause people to make quick, habitual judgments about a situation. Sometimes, their judgments are correct; but often, given the complexity of the situation, they need to seek fresh insight. In Action Reflection Learning™ programs, complex problems are continually reinterpreted and reformulated based on newly gathered information that is processed collaboratively by the team. Based on new insights, teams begin to take action to address what they think to be the problem. This yields new data, and a fresh cycle of reinterpretation. The underlying theory behind this iterative cycle is action research as formulated by Kurt Lewin.

The ARL Program Being Studied

This paper reports findings derived from a study conducted in a multi-national food products company striving to transform itself into a global organization with a single profit-and-loss-statement mentality. We use the pseudonym Integrated Foods for the company in this paper. Making this change required going from a divisionalized product structure to a globalized, mixed functional structure. At the time when the company's C.E.O. began sharing this vision with his executive committee, the walls between the various operating divisions were virtually impermeable. These divisions were comprised of companies with their own brand names and were steeped in their own deep traditions, and their own national and organizational cultures. Additionally, there was a compelling need for significant executive development to realize a global vision. A survey conducted by a company-wide organization development task force had gathered data suggesting that a significant management skill gap existed in the organization. Seven dimensions were most prominent in the data. These became the program's focus, and are discussed below vis-a-vis what managers learned through the program.

Management initiated an extensive ARL™ program to develop these competencies. Three programs were carried out, each of which lasted over a period of six months and consisted of twenty top-level managers. The design followed the pattern described above. Each of the four meetings in any given program was held in a different country in order to emphasize the global nature of the program's objectives. Project teams were also global in composition. Each problem assigned to a team was sponsored by a member of the company's executive committee. Each team had to provide a recommendation for its project, that had been in some way partially tested for

implementation, at the end of the fourth residential week. This recommendation was made in a presentation to the entire program community and the executive committee.

Methodology

Our research began with the second program and continued with the third program. This was a field study involving triangulation of four methods of data gathering. First, extensive field notes were gathered by a participant observer over the course of these two programs. These notes were based on observation and interaction with participants and staff. Second, seventy-one formal interviews were conducted throughout the company. These interviews included participants in the three ARL™ programs, managers and individual contributors throughout the organization who did not attend the program, and three members of the executive team. Interviews were guided by a prepared interview schedule and were audio-taped and transcribed. Third, a pre-test/post-test statistical analysis was done on the 360 degree feedback data that was gathered as part of the program. Both a chi square and repeated measures t-test analysis were performed with the data from the 360 degree feedback. Finally, various products from the ARL™ programs are being analyzed, such as participant evaluations of the sessions.

The analysis reported in this paper is based primarily on observation and interview data. An inductive analysis is being carried out on the data by a team of five researchers. This team has met regularly throughout the research process: first to debrief the participant observer at various stages of the data gathering process, and later, to code the data and begin to build theory from the analysis. This analysis is part of a larger research program that is seeking to develop a broader theory of action learning within organizations.

Findings: What kind of Learning Takes Place in the Program?

The remainder of this paper discusses findings about the nature and extent of learning, and its transfer to the workplace. We begin by discussing learning within the program. We look first at what was learned vis-a-vis content objectives—the seven management skill areas identified as critical to achieve the company's goals. In so doing, we also consider the less explicit process capacities that are modeled by the program staff in their interactions with teams.

The seven management skills around which the program was designed included developing (1) a global perspective, (2) interpersonal communications, (3) teamwork, (4) trust, (5) conflict management, (6) leadership, and (7) innovation and change. Analysis of data thus far suggests that a major outcome of the program is a dramatic shift toward considering Integrated Foods as a global company, rather than as a collection of semi-autonomous divisions. Innovation and change, the seventh item, are harder to capture in the short run. Individuals and teams have taken innovative steps as they pursued project solutions, and have adopted many new behaviors and strategies throughout the program. The true test of innovation and change capacity, however, is longer term, and thus we believe, harder to measure with respect to what was learned within the program. The bulk of our discussion in this section focuses on the remaining five management skills, which cluster synchronously and seem to bear a strong relationship to the design of the program, that is facilitated learning teams who are working on real strategic issues.

Global Perspective By far the most visible learning has been the emergence of a global perspective and the emergence of a network of executives around the world who are willing and eager to work together. A participant from the first program captured the learning of many participants throughout the program when he pointed out that through the program he learned "not just what other people did, but . . . that we were part of the same organization. Integrated Foods, I don't think, really existed except in the minds of several executives" prior to the program's inception. It is doubtful that a less intensive experience would have accomplished the same thing. Intensity was achieved, in part, because participants worked on highly visible strategic issues, and everyone in the company, including the executive committee, was keeping an eye on how projects were being handled. One manager characterized the experience as follows:

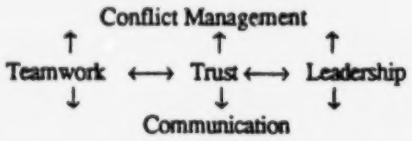
> It's the idea of a shared adversity creating a bond between people . . . certainly all of us have a more intimate relationship in the business sense with one another. . . . That kind of intimacy, I guess it's based on trust, you're more open and more direct . . . . The ability to

> pick up the phone to talk to someone you haven't talked to in six months . . . . you are immediately at a higher level of communication than you would be if it was just a person you happen to know on a functional basis throughout the organization.

This same manager then described the way in which people in his facility extended assistance to a group from another division working on a project, and pointed out that this would never have happened before the program: "We provided a lot of assistance to them, knowing full well that this doesn't benefit the profit and loss statement of *my* business unit. It's an *Integrated Foods* project."

Synchronous Learning Cluster The five remaining dimensions form what seem to be a cluster of interdependent behaviors that develop synchronously. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Synchronous Learning Cluster[2]



Within each team one can observe critical exchanges of dialogue that move the team forward in its development both as a task oriented unit and a learning unit. These critical exchanges suggest evidence of an interrelated cluster of these dimensions, although in any given exchange, some elements might be more latent than others. An example is found during the first week of one of the programs in which a contest over *leadership* emerged between two of the most senior people in the team during the first few days of work. One of the contestants for leadership said to the other, "I am uncomfortable . . . . you are leading, but not marshaling us in a direction," to which another, considerably more junior member of the group said, "I think he's doing what *you* want to do." This same speaker had earlier commented that the group did not use any of the tools they were learning to manage *teamwork*, and hence, that he did not think the group was functioning well together. This dialogue also shows that *conflict* can be brought out and examined in ARL™ teams. In this group, leadership had to be earned, not delegated based on seniority as would often be the case in Integrated Foods. So that everyone could develop leadership skills, members rotated this role among themselves. However, members learned that leadership comes by *communicating* one's thoughts within the group in order to ensure that issues were not conveniently skirted or decisions made with too much haste.

Groups learned sensitivity to *group process* issues, even though their process often broke down in practice, forcing them to deal with the consequences and often take a step backward in order to learn. For example, early in the second week of the program, one team was struggling over both task and leadership issues. At one point, a member pointed out that another kept referring to needs as if they were personal rather than *teamwork* issues. He continued: "I think we have team needs. I think you need it as much as me." The team initiated a reflection and dialogue process and were very frank and listened to one another in order to *manage the conflict:*

> First Person: We are in a struggle. Making false assumptions. I've communicated my needs and it just plops. I feel a lot of pressure that I am the one holding up the group.
>
> Second Person: We are not making a lot of progress. Not addressing each other's needs. . . I feel a tension in myself . . . that we will have a million things to do.

Teams learned that groups must be continually nurtured. As one participant noted, "in regard to forming, storming, norming, we are doing all of those things at different times depending on what we are working on." He pointed out that "*Communication* is the glue that keeps us together." The group recognized that despite task pressures, they needed to manage process, and codified a phrase to remind themselves of this—"panic slowly."

Another team had a major *conflict* at midnight, two nights before its final presentation to the executive committee in the last week of the program. They went to bed, returned the next morning, and completely reorganized their presentation. One member commented, "It's the

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[2]Lyle Yorks originally identified this cluster when preparing findings for feedback to the executive team of Integrated Foods.

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maturity of the group. Nothing was taken personally. We got up the next morning and said, 'let's get going.'" Another member of this team pointed out that without conflict, "you get nothing—passive behavior," which led to suppressed differences of opinion. This team learned that they could successfully surface and resolve conflicts.

Conflict was often managed in this way. One strategy in ARL™ that facilitates the surfacing of different points of view and their management is what has come to be known as the "stop-write it-reflect," opportunities for everyone to periodically stop and take time to gather his/her thoughts, often in writing, and to then publicly let others know what each is thinking. They can then examine implications for participants, the team, or the organization. This technique helped resolve conflict constructively in one team that was being pulled in two different directions by different leaders in the group. A team member recalls what happened when a third member of the group suggested this strategy:

> Stop-write it-reflect . . . (was) sort of mind shattering. . . . We were going through a number of discussions where X and I and a couple of the others were really at odds, that we just couldn't see each others' point of view. We finally did stop, and we wrote each thing down . . . And when we wrote it down, they were almost identical. The way I was expressing it (to him), the way I was hearing (him), it was just totally reversed. . . . by taking that little bit of time to actually understand the other person's viewpoint, we took a leapfrog as to where we were going.

Trust was a fundamental part of this process. Members had to assess how much they could trust one another to both deliver on assignments and to accept and respond to feedback in the group. Members of one team, who were spread geographically, for example, found that they had to "trust that people would do" his or her assignment. They were pleased when "We all came with it done."

Transfer of Learning During the Program A feature that is unique to ARL™ because participants meet periodically over six months is that they try out what they are learning back on the job. They often encounter the kind of resistance they might otherwise encounter after a training program, but they still have time to bring their stories back to colleagues and staff for support and assistance. In the Integrated Foods program, such try-outs were especially striking between the third and fourth weeks of the program.[3] Some try-outs were successful; others reflect a desire for feedback to determine whether or not to continue the behavior:

- One participant attempted to become more involved in resolving conflict with his subordinates. During a reflection-and-dialogue session,[4] he reported that his subordinates "were uneasy—they disliked my change in style."
- Another asked: "What do you do with people who have not been through the program—dealing with the threat to others when you change?"
- A third participant pointed out that during a meeting, he asked his staff to write down and reflect on their ideas for an upcoming project. In the past he would have simply described what he wanted. What emerged was a "group idea different from mine. I don't know where it came from. . . . Nobody has time, (but) everybody found time to work on this idea. They said it could be done by the end of the year."

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[3]The ARL™ Inquiry team hypothesizes that there may be a natural progression over the four weeks of the program in the focus of learning which could contribute to the timing of such examples. In the first week, participants are becoming oriented to the program. Their focus is generally on their own individual learning. By the second week, as the teams grapple with their projects, the spotlight is more on the team's learning. In the third week, participants receive feedback about themselves from others in the organization in the form of a 360 degree assessment instrument. This heightens their consciousness of the back home environment. In the fourth week, participants look forward to next steps, and as such, typically focus increasingly on systems learning within the program's learning community, as well as within the organization where they will no longer enjoy the formal support provided by the program.

[4]Reflection -and-dialogue sessions in the ARL™ program are modeled after the work being done by Bill Isaacs (1993) with this concept. Participants sit in a circle and surface their thoughts, but no one is allowed to respond to points raised or discuss them in the usual way during this time period. The purpose of these sessions is to uncover thinking that otherwise might be unavailable to others in the group.

- Another participant spoke more consciously of delegating responsibility, and asked a subordinate to make an important call to an important customer who was "in the market."
- Another manager "had a meeting between manufacturing and technology. There was the possibility of conflict. I started the meeting by asking everyone to give their expectations for the meeting. I was afraid no one would speak up, but they all did."

Comments such as these begin to reflect the issues these participants will deal with as they try to transfer their learning to begin organizational change.

Findings: Transfer of Learning to the Workplace after the ARL™ Program

Transfer of learning after the program was examined through interviews with participants, as well as subordinates, peers, and others with whom they interact to determine whether people noticed changes in behavior and/or capacity.

Interviews suggest that the extent of transfer of new knowledge and behavior, as well as practices learned in the program, varies greatly. First, Integrated Foods has locations around the world. Participants who came from offices where only a few members participated in the program commented on the fact that, while they might have changed their outlook and capacity, they could not as easily implement the new behaviors and skills they had learned. In such cases, work on real projects had not extended sufficiently to their own workplace locations, nor was a critical mass of people developed who could easily support one another in taking on new practices. In other cases, a critical mass did participate from the same area, and/or the projects were closer to home. In addition, several offices implemented spin-off activities modeled after the principles of the ARL™ program that reinforced new learnings and spread ideas and practices more quickly to others below the top management level.[5]

About 80% of the people interviewed in two areas of the organization in which a significant number of managers had participated in the program could see some changes in individual managerial styles. The range of change described reached from "significant changes" in some cases to "some change," with the weight of opinion at the latter end of the scale. People were most likely to note change in their own bosses, but not necessarily see it in others, especially managers who were a level or two above them. Interviewees noticed both individual changes as well as "some consensus about how to handle, how to act . . . some cohesion between people who went to the program." However, comments also suggest that while managers did try out new skills, they were also as likely to slip back into old behaviors without the support of the program or other kinds of reinforcement. One interviewee who works closely with several of the graduates estimated "it might be fifty-fifty. . . . I'm not saying that they are at the same level as before but they are slipping away a little bit." The same interviewee also noted that the program had "a tremendous impact on the way they know they can behave. They will never forget that." Another interviewee pointed out, "if you want to change the business, people have to think differently. This training goes very deep. He (a participant in the second program) looked at people differently for a time. . . . As we get started (on the organization's restructuring), it will come back to him."

Transfer is strongest between peers, and upward, in part because the program has touched more managers at the senior levels, or at best, the middle levels.[6] Even then, interview comments reinforce the fact that, while changes occur, not everyone can see them, nor are they uniformly sustained. A group of comments about the same team reflect this uneven quality. One member of an executive team at the division level commented:

Well, (our) executive group has now all gone . . . and we had a number of meetings which

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[5]Spin off activities included, for example, a local ARL™ program facilitated largely by participants who graduated from the parent program along with some outside PTAs, a one-week version of the program for managers at less senior levels, and regional meetings that were designed around real problems and that incorporated some of the practices encouraged in ARL™ programs such as stop-and-reflect sessions or reflection-and-dialogue sessions.

[6]Several interviewees commented on this as a weakness of the program's impact. The bulk of people on the shop floor had little contact, if any, with these changes except in a few instances, where a local program had been held using these design principles.

> are still not run necessarily in a positive meeting sense, that everybody contributes the way they should, but if you looked at it, we would have had say, two years ago, meetings where people were being broached on a subject that they felt uncomfortable with, they would become much more defensive than they are now, to the point where you either would have . . . I wouldn't call it name calling but things going off the subject . . . . (Now) I think we tend to be more focused on trying to get the job resolved without focusing on personal differences or personal injury.

Another member of that same team commented positively on the same team, as follows:

> I used to have the feeling in our meetings that comments I made about (matters outside my function) went by others without any listening or consideration. Now we take each other's input seriously. That, to me, is a fundamental shift in how we run our company.

Simultaneously, another person on this team observed that "we've never set up our team norms and we continue to function as traditional teams do in all organizations . . . we're not really functioning as a real team." A person who works for this latter individual observes this ambivalence, as well, in his boss: "sometimes he is more open than in the past, more reflective . . . other times, you don't see the change."

While comments suggest uneven transfer of learning, many interviewees note changes in behaviors and practices in those who participated in the program. One interviewee's comment is not unlike others in the data collected:

> If you have a meeting (with people from the program), there is a difference. They become better listeners. They also take some time to have some reflection. . . . They take a step back. They evaluate what was said. . . . There is better understanding in a number of people. . . . In the beginning it was very difficult to say 'let's have some reflection; others say let him have his fun, then go on with the meeting. . . . Now the number of people who know reflection is growing.

Most frequently mentioned are behaviors around sharing information (which was seldom done before), an openness to the opinions of others, higher level of reflection and ability to listen to others, and encouragement of dialogue from and with staff.

Discussion: Developing an Infrastructure for Individual and Organizational Change

The ARL™ program has had an impact on Integrated Foods in a number of different ways. Savings have already been realized from some of the project recommendations, and the company is also being restructured along global lines based on project team results. In another paper for this conference, we separately examine the impact of the program on change in the organization's culture. To conclude this paper, we discuss implications of our findings for the way in which transfer of learning does or does not assist participants to develop an infrastructure for individual and organizational change.

Earlier in this paper, we suggested that, ideally, a program such as ARL™—in which real workplace issues are embedded in its design—might be more conducive to transfer of learning because difficulties that are normally postponed and dealt with in isolation can surface and be examined as part of the training program. The data from this study, while limited, suggest that transfer is easier in cases where participants can bring more of their workplace reality to the program—in terms of the issues addressed, the socio-cultural-political context, and support through a critical mass of colleagues. However, there are many constraints to the design of these programs that also militate against transfer of learning outcomes.

We suggest that the power of the ARL™ design lies in the extent of engagement in the work of the project teams, and a participant's willingness to become involved in new approaches that embody reflection and experimentation.[7] Many participants did transfer skills back to their home environment, although data also suggest that the degree of effort varied. Some

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[7]Lyle Yorks suggests that participants fall into three groups based on their adaptive posture: (1) those who embrace the program with tentative trust and an openness toward experiencing it on its own terms; (2) those who adopt a posture of "constructive distancing" who learn selectively and experience the program on their own terms; and (3) those who "manage" the experience by adopting a personal script that permits them to explain themselves to others in a way they hope is publicly acceptable, but who limit the extent of their engagement.

participants—either by dint of personality, power of position, or support of a critical mass—began practicing new behaviors before they left the program and continued after the program was completed, although "slippage" did occur. Relationships with others helped. As one participant in the third program said, "one of my people came back from the teambuilding workshop and I saw him using the skills with me. This was helpful, I felt supported." By holding three programs, a network was built to offset the isolation of being one of a few anointed to go through the program. However, interviews suggest that, unless graduates worked close to one another, contact among graduates of different programs was not extensive.

Interviewees also commented on the usual retardants to change. The culture of the company, while acted upon by project teams, also had an identity of its own that had endured for generations and that was not easily shifted. There was a need to change reward systems to support the global design and cooperation among departments and sites. The press of other work and overcommitments made it difficult to live up to one's espoused beliefs.

One of the most significant impacts has been on the Integrated Foods executive team itself. In the first program, the contrast between the old and new ways of managing was most evident at the end of the program. The senior executive team entered in their roles as clients. They immediately began interrupting and acting in ways that were not consistent with good interpersonal process. This was clearly evident to the participants in the program. One of the participants commented: "we'd learned all these techniques—dialogue, listening skills—and we got the senior executives together and they had a meeting and they just basically argued with each other." The participants immediately brought this to the executive team's attention. This led the executive team to examine the way in which members functioned together. Their examination led to some significant changes. Participants in the program confronted the disjunctures immediately with the executive committee, and they in turn, did not deny, explode, threaten, or use the power that comes with their position to protect themselves. Their example has provided a strong message to sustain momentum toward increased transfer of learning outcomes in the future.

In conclusion, we suggest that a program that brings workplace issues into its design does hold more potential for effective transfer of learning, but it is not enough on its own. It is clear that this ARL™ program could only provide a platform for moving an organization forward. In fact, there is danger in claiming too much credit for any one program or effort. Success comes through an integrated learning and organizational change intervention.

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Using Organizational Learning in an Action Research Intervention to Maintain Critical Technical Knowledge and Skills

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This paper reports on an organizational diagnosis and action research intervention that was guided by a model of organizational learning. The specific problem that was addressed was the identification, storage and dissemination of scarce skills and knowledge of NASA engineers. Strategies created to address the results of the diagnosis included strengthening systems around dialogue and information sharing, strategies to create new knowledge in the technical and social realms and mechanisms to increase the number and types of storage bins for expert information.

Introduction

Learning is a critical competency of the 1990s (Senge, 1990). It is almost a cliché to speak about the nature of the global competitive environment, the pace of changing technology and the development of a skilled workforce. Internal characteristics of organizations that facilitate learning ahead of competitors are now considered as or more important to maintaining advantage than just product, brand or economic strategies (Kiernan 1993; Ulrich & Lake, 1991). Learning, innovation and adaptation are equal strategic objectives along with traditional goals such as achieving efficiency in operations and managing risk. This thought is echoed by many organizational theorists who point out that the ability to acquire and use collective knowledge is central to competitive advantage (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Hamel & Prahald, 1994; Doz & Prahalad, 1992; Senge, 1990). Conscious attention to developing mechanisms for organizational learning are crucial "meta-strategies" in today's environment.

Problem Statement and Purpose

Although organizational learning is considered a major competency, there is still a short supply of techniques that address how the principles of organizational learning can be used to intervene and guide change in organizations (Doz & Prahalad, 1993). The contribution of the present paper is to help bridge the gap between theory and practice in organizational learning. It reports on an action research intervention that illuminates the interplay between theory and practice in organizational learning. It also provides the consequences of the effort from both the theoretical and practical organizational perspectives.

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Theoretical Framework

Organizational Learning Although there are many definitions of organizational learning (e.g., Huber, 1991; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Argyris & Schon, 1978), we selected Duncan & Weiss's (1979, p, 84) definition: " organizational learning is defined as the process by which knowledge about action outcome relationships between the organization and its environment is developed". We adopted this definition because it targets the organizational level and because it views learning as an ongoing process that involves interpretation and adaptation. We also made several assumptions about the nature of organizational learning. The first is that it is more than the sum of individual learning. Although individuals are the carriers and enable learning in organizations, there is a collective level of knowledge that is more than just adding up everything that everyone knows (Dodgson, 1993). The second assumption was that organizational learning is affected by and affects contextual factors such as strategy, structure and culture (Lundberg, 1989). Finally, we adopted a perspective that organizational learning contains a component that is interpretative in nature and that understanding action outcome relationships involve collective interpretation (Schwandt, 1993, 1995; Huber, 1991; Shiristava, 1985).

Schwandt Organizational Learning Model The action research intervention was based on Schwandt's (1993, 1995) model of organizational learning. The model adopts a sociotechnical perspective because it addresses both the social and behavioral patterns in the organization as well as technical systems (Davis & Trist, 1974). This model is also consistent with, as well as modifies and extends, other researchers' classification of the organizational learning literature and constructs (e.g., Dixon, 1992. Huber, 1991; Shiristava, 1985).

The model conceptualizes organizational learning as a system that contains four elements that must be healthy if it is to survive and function. The first, **environmental interface**, gathers and filters information from the environment. Through a variety of mechanisms and from a number of sources, the organization collects data about trends in the environment and other information in order to ensure adaptation. Data collection can be either passive or active, processed extensively or relatively unfiltered.

The second element, **action reflection**, acts as an interpretative mechanism to evaluate and make decisions about organizational actions and their consequences in relation to goals and objectives. Processes such as dialogue, debate, deliberation, critical reflection and formal decision making serve to transform data into valued knowledge about an action's usefulness in achieving organizational goals.

The third element, **structuring**, transfers information and knowledge through out the organization. The element operates through formal and informal acts to share information and integrate knowledge and action. These include formal methods such as newsletters and policies as well as informal mechanisms such as rumors and grapevines.

The final element, **meaning and memory**, is the controlling component of the learning system as well as an operating component like the other three. This element stores information through a variety of mechanisms including people, culture, structures and ecology (Walsh & Ungson, 1991). In this way this element helps to ensure stability in thinking and action. It also can facilitate learning because stored experience may be used to address action in the current situation. On the other hand, this element may serve to inhibit learning because it also contains underlying and often unconscious assumptions that may not be functional in the current situation (Schein, 1991). These may include assumptions about the characteristics of the environment to those that focus on the nature of employees.

All four elements in the model are dynamic and have a continuous and interactive effect on one another. This interaction occurs through a set of outputs for each element. For example, the environmental interface's output is new information that is a result of data gathering and filtering activities. The output from action/reflection is goal referenced knowledge. The output from structuring is structuration includes a dynamic combination of organizational structures, policies, roles, responsibilities and processes that result from dynamic social interactions. Finally, the output from memory and meaning is sensemaking.

Using the model as a guide for qualitative analysis can illuminate the fitness of each organizational learning element, uncover the dominance of one over another or identify an over-reliance on certain strategies. In turn, because each element contains a variety of concrete activities, crafting an intervention is not difficult. The remaining sections of this paper describe how this model was used in an organizational diagnosis and intervention.

Research Questions

The case described is an action research intervention designed to address a specific problem. As a result, the research questions were generally formulated around problem statements. The project, however, did address the following issues in the field of organizational learning: 1) Can a sociotechncial model of organizational learning be used as a diagnostic tool? 2) Can a sociotechnical model of organizational learning be used to prescribe an intervention that impacts collective learning? 3) What are the elements and characteristics of this intervention? and 4) What are the consequences?

Research Site

The project took place at one of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Center's Engineering Directorates. This organization is tasked with the design, development and operation of satellites and their instruments. These are used by NASA, university professors and other research institutions to conduct basic and applied science in space. The Engineering Directorate's workforce is made up of engineers, scientists and computer scientists. The management structure is lean and most work is accomplished through the collaboration of these individuals.

The age distribution of the workforce in the Engineering Directorate could be characterized as bi-modal. There were a number of people hired in the late 1960's and again in the late 1980's. There are few employees who in the middle of their career. Most are either thinking about retirement or just beginning their career. As a result, the leaders in the Engineering Directorate were concerned that the loss of the more experienced individuals would leave a void that could impact the development of future systems.

The goals of the Engineering Directorate were to: 1) capture and transfer to younger employees' scarce knowledge and skill; 2) develop ways to maintain knowledge and skills apart from experts; 3) create a culture of learning among experts and younger employees; and 4) create a culture where ongoing debate, discussion and inquiry about technical methods was encouraged.

Methodology

A qualitative methodology was used to gather the type of robust data that was necessary to obtain the rich information required by the model, but also required by the action orientation of the project. It was used to craft the intervention described later in this paper.

Data Collection To initiate the process, a set of interview questions were developed to assess the current status of each of the four elements of the organization's learning system. Individual interviews were conducted with technical experts as well as selected members of management. Small group interviews were held with younger employees in specific departments. Interviews were targeted in functional areas that had been identified by a recent project audit as having deficits in the knowledge and skill level necessary to perform on future engineering projects. The results of this assessment not only served to guide our diagnosis and interventions but also provided a baseline to assess change.

Data analysis Responses to these and other questions were collated and analyzed. Themes were extracted and documented. These were shared with and validated by participants from the focus groups and interviews. Additionally, they were shown to management for validation.

Results

The themes that emerged in the environmental interface element appeared healthy. Active information gathering about knowledge and skill needs, new technologies and their application appeared to be at a level that was satisfactory to management, technical experts and other employees. The problem, however, seemed to be the lack of dissemination, evaluation and sharing of this information and knowledge. Therefore, it was not surprising that the results showed that the action/reflection, structuring and memory and meaning elements of the organization's needed attention.

Problem areas in action/reflection centered on a lack of mechanisms for senior technical experts and younger engineers and scientists to systematically evaluate the utility of technical approaches. In memory and meaning, issues focused on problems related to cultural inhibitors associated with inadequate access by young employees to expert knowledge and skills. Specifically, it appeared that most knowledge and organizational memory about technical approaches was stored with specific individuals. Because of a culture that produced minimal interaction between senior experts and younger employees and the non-routine nature of the information, exposure to this knowledge was limited. There was also an apparent resistance by senior experts to documenting organizational memory in accessible forms such as manuals, training courses or expert system databases. Most agreed that you "couldn't just write this information down, you had to experience it". Finally, the structuring element was also targeted for improvement. In fact, most younger employees stated that they felt that they lacked an appreciation about the total approach to the engineering process in the Directorate. This, as well as specific technical expertise had never been systematically shared. Communication had been limited due to the small amount of informal and formal interaction with other departments, management and, most importantly, senior technical experts.

Intervention

Based on these results, we designed a series of interventions to: 1) increase the number of storage bins where critical knowledge resided and move from an over-reliance on senior experts to a more even approach that included younger employees, databases, manuals, processes and structures that facilitated wide spread storage of critical information; 2) establish a set of mechanisms to facilitate the ongoing sharing of critical knowledge and skills between senior experts and younger employees and between younger employees themselves; and 3) develop a culture that supports opportunities for and skill in dialogue, debate and critical reflection about the feasibility of technical approaches, given specific situations. Specifics of the intervention will be described using each element as an organizing framework.

Memory and Meaning To begin to provide the younger employees an overall context to assimilate expert knowledge, we began the intervention by conducting a workshop with senior experts and younger employees to make explicit the overall systems engineering process for each technical discipline and to identify the critical areas for knowledge storage and dissemination. We hoped to begin a process that would develop a collective schema among younger employees and senior experts and would also facilitate and exchange and integration of expert information and strategies (Lord & Foti, 1986; Walsh and Ungson, 1991).

For the workshop, participants were organized into functional teams. Each team included a senior technical expert, four to five younger employees and the manager of the workgroup. These teams were selected based on the manpower assessment described earlier. To begin to develop shared schemas for the entire engineering process, each senior expert was asked to

articulate their representation (there was no overall Directorate level process) of the engineering development process using mapping techniques such as data flow diagramming, hierarchical input-output diagrams, decision network diagrams, Warnier-Orr diagrams and others. The younger employees participated in this exercise by asking questions and evaluating the maps in terms of their utility back on the job. Encouraging discussion and dialogue about the maps served to promote a common understanding of organizational actions and more distributed storage of expert information (Huber, 1991; Poole, Gray & Gioia, 1990).

Following the creation of expert maps, each team was asked to come to consensus on which part(s) of the map were critical to success of a typical engineering project. These "critical lever points" then became the focus for subsequent activities focused on information storage and sharing. Following the workshop, participants met again in a series of facilitated sessions to refine the information around the technical map and each lever point. Additionally, each team was also asked to develop a set of recommendations for storing information about the entire process as well as the specific, critical lever points. Recommendations were guided by a set of criteria that considered areas such as the frequency of use of the information, complexity and ability to standardize the technical approach.

Strategies developed for storing organizational memory ranged from the development of expert systems that would assist in conducting stress analysis for expendable launch vehicle vibration to a series of lessons learned video tapes on the problems encountered with instrument development. The recommendation for an ongoing series of information sharing and technical problem solving meetings with a large audience was popular among the younger employees and adopted by most teams.

Structuring Dissemination of knowledge is also necessary for increasing organizational memory (Huber, 1991). As a result, each team developed a plan for dissemination and diffusion of technical information. It included formal and informal methods designed to transfer information from the senior technical experts to younger employees as well as methods for exchanging information among the younger employees and with other organizational units.

There were a number of formal strategies adopted by the teams. They included electronic bulletin boards that would be updated monthly focused on new techniques, lessons learned, and other important technical information. Many teams opted for institutionalizing a series of "brown bag" meetings once a month to discuss technical problems and issues among themselves and with senior experts. These were advertised across Departments to maximize exposure and information exchange. Other teams selected more standard approaches including training and documentation of procedures and processes. One team used a combination of methods and instituted a formal lessons learned program that made technical information available to other teams as it came on line through a combination of lunch meetings, electronic bulletin boards, training and memos. Finally, one team instituted a program where senior experts and younger employees came together on a ongoing basis to hear about current technologies outlined in journal articles or at conferences.

Action/Reflection Questioning underlying assumptions and unlearning are critical to the knowledge production that is essential for organizational learning (Argyris, 1992; Hedberg, 1981). Uncovering unproductive knowledge and questioning unconscious assumptions, however, are not easily learned tasks. In the Engineering Directorate, although senior knowledge was critical for success, it also had the risk of becoming unproductive and outdated (Levinthal & March, 1993). To address this, we incorporated into each team activities designed to teach skills in critical inquiry as well as set up a culture that supported evaluation and debate about established technical methods.

To accomplish this we borrowed from Argyris' (1992) work on questioning assumptions and defensive cycles. This included having team members construct hypothetical situations where they might want to question assumptions and agreeing on how they would do this and how they would handle the potential consequences and outcomes. Teams agreed to practice norms consistent with dialogue such as suspending evaluation, no personal attacks on ideas and other habits such as bringing outsiders in for critical review points (Brooks, 1994; Marsick & Watkins, 1993). We also taught team members techniques such as devil's advocate decisionmaking and the dialectical method (Cosier & Schwenk, 1990).

Outcomes

To evaluate the effort, there was a formal six month status review at the Directorate level as well as monthly team updates during technical review meetings. At six months, we interviewed each team in three areas: 1) whether or not they had engaged in the activities they planned; 2) whether or not they thought they were making progress; and 3) barriers or issues in implementation.

Results of the interviews showed that 9 out of the 12 teams had been making progress toward achieving their plans. The teams that were most active seemed to have younger employees that took a vigorous role in the process including scheduling meetings and ensuring that technical experts were available. Teams that focused on less formal activities such as "brown bag" lunches and development of guidebooks and procedure manuals seemed to make more progress than teams that had planned to develop more formal and complicated processes such an expert systems or databases.

Of the 9 teams that were active in the first six months, 8 considered the activity a success. Many of the younger employees stated that they felt better prepared to take on technical activities that only a few months ago they considered the domain of senior experts. They also reported a perceived increase in dialogue in team meetings that questioned established assumptions about doing business. They also reported an enhanced awareness of where to find technical information independent of personally asking a senior expert. Management also reported that during the latest review of manpower projections for new projects, there appeared to be a greater number of employees that they considered ready to assume critical technical roles than just months before.

The most common barrier reported was the amount of time that senior experts were willing to devote to team activities. Younger employees, however, were eager to address these issues and willing to work after hours on this effort. A second barrier was that senior experts tended to view the problem as training related and not associated with organizational culture. The third barrier, mentioned earlier, was a lack of dedicated resources for this activity.

Summary

This project demonstrated that an organizational learning model can be useful in organizational diagnosis as well as in designing and intervention to produce change. Organization learning theories and models, in this case, provided a structured way to conceptualize organizational issues as well as define remedies. Finally, an initial set of outcome measures support that the set of activities in this intervention had, at least on a qualitative level, outcomes that were perceived a successful. In the future, a more defined evaluation piece at the end of the effort would allowus to examine and quantify the evidence for change. Currently, however, the state of theory and models in organizational learning does not lend easily to quantitative evaluation. This case may also lead us to develop research propositions that could be tested in similar contexts.

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Organizational Learning As Culture Construction

ARL™INQUIRY[1]

Changing an organization is generally understood to involve changing that organization's culture. However, the social processes involved in the dynamics of culture change have received less formal attention. This paper reports a theoretical model derived from field study data of an intervention performed with a multi-national corporation attempting to develop globalization.

This paper reports observations and analysis of culture change processes resulting from an Action Reflection Learning™ (ARL™) program. Specifically, we examine the social processes by which change in the organization's culture is developed and learned.

ARL is a form of action learning developed by Leadership in International Management Ltd. (LIM) involving groups working on challenging tasks, or problems, and experiencing learning through facilitated reflective practice. In a typical ARL program small teams focus on strategically driven business questions. The teams meet during four, one week residential sessions held over a six to nine month period. During these week-long sessions the members of the four teams also meet periodically as a total community. During these community meetings participants engage in various learning activities. They also participate in reflection and dialogue sessions. In addition to the four residential sessions, teams schedule working time between program meetings as needed for project work. The program staff are called Project Team Advisors (PTA's). The PTA's work with the Program Director overseeing the program to design the process and with the teams to facilitate learning through reflection and dialogue, and providing just-in-time learning experiences for the entire program community. (A more complete description of Action Reflection Learning practice can be found in Marsick & Cederholm, 1988.)

The ARL™ Program Being Studied

The study being reported here is taking place in a large, multi-national divisional company that is using ARL as means of developing managers to transform itself into a global network organization. Management has determined that to remain competitive the company must function as a global organization, mirroring what is happening to many of its large customers. A 1992 corporate culture survey identified seven areas that needed to be addressed in order to enhance the ability of the organization to perform effectively as a global organization beyond the development of a one global profit and loss statement mentality: 1) teamwork, 2) employee development, 3) trust, 4) leadership, 5) communications, 6) conflict management, and 7) innovation and change. Three ARL programs were scheduled to be held, each comprised of twenty senior level managers selected from various parts of the world wide organization. These twenty participants were divided into four project teams. Each team worked on a project of strategic importance to the

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[1]ARL™ Inquiry is a research group affiliated with Leadership in International Management Ltd. All authors are members of ARL™ Inquiry. Glenn Nilson, Eastern Connecticut State University, took leadership in formulating the theory and preparing this paper from data gathered by Lyle Yorks, Eastern Connecticut State University, who served as field observer, and jointly analyzed by members of the ARL™ Inquiry research group include in alphabetical order: Robert Kolodny, Adjuct, New School for Social Research; Victoria J. Marsick, Teachers College, Columbia University; Judy O'Neil, Adjunct, Teachers College, Columbia University.

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organization that was sponsored by a member of the company's Executive Committee. The teams had to provide a recommendation for its project at the end of the fourth residential week of its program. This recommendation was made in a presentation to the entire program community and the Executive Committee. The residential weeks were held at locations in North America, Europe, and Asia.

These ARL programs have generated spin-offs that have contributed to the results being reported here. For example, the impact of the first ARL program on the President of one of the European Divisions was so strong that he initiated a local program. This local program focused on fostering collaboration between functional managers in the Division and involved more people with ARL learning methods. On the recommendation of the quality project team from the first ARL program, team building skill programs, utilizing an ARL design have been held for people lower in the organization. The Vice Presidents of the American Divison, all of whom participated in one of the first two ARL programs, suggested to their Division President that the methods learned from the ARL programs be used in the annual division meeting. This meeting consequently become much more focused on initiating efforts toward addressing certain strategic challenges facing the Division.

Problem Statement and Theoretical Framework

Culture is typically conceived as a system of shared meanings, values and behavioral expectations. In organizations, culture has often been treated as a managerial product that can be introduced, cascaded, and diffused, resulting in whatever system of values and behaviors is desired. Schein (1985) regards culture manipulation as the prime responsibility of management. Deal & Kennedy (1982, p.193) assert that successful managers of the future will be "...heroes who can forge the values and beliefs..." of the organization.

This paper takes a slightly less deterministic approach and views culture change as more socially constructed than simply managerially determined. Culture derives from the collective interpretation and designation of events which symbolize important (and sometimes emergent) values, perspectives, and roles (Fine,1979). The generation and evolution of culture is inherently social.

> Cultures cannot be produced by individuals acting alone. They originate as individuals interact with one another. Individuals may originate specific ways of managing the fundamental insecurities of life, but until these specific ways come to be collectively accepted and put into practice they are not part of a culture. (Trice & Beyer, 1993, p.5)

An organization's culture is its means of mitigating against uncertainty and a means to "...channel people's actions so that most of the time they repeat apparently successful patterns of behavior..."(Trice & Beyer, 1993, p.2). Thus an organization's culture is as much a response of its members to situations encountered, including managerial behavior, as it is a product of managerial attempts to direct the behavior of members. The point here is that rather than viewing organizational change as necessarily determined by management and successfully, or unsuccessfully diffused throughout the organization, we take the position that organizational culture is a product of the interaction of members of the organization at all levels, and that any change process is not simply linear and unidirectional. To understand intentional organizational change from this perspective, it is necessary to examine the dynamics of interaction that produce, or change, an organization's culture, and to look at intervention strategies and attempts in that regard.

This approach does not preclude the important role of leadership, or management, in the construction or change of culture, but it gives more weight to the significance of what (Argysis & Schon, 1978) refer to as theories in practice over espoused theories. That is, culture is not

simply something that is handed down and insisted upon by management, but rather it includes the social meanings and significance of given orders, actions and events by the members of the organization, and emerges through the participants' on-going interaction.

We believe that in a stable context, culture is the taken-for-granted meanings and meta-meanings, together with shared values and behavioral expectations, which provide a basis for individuals to meet problems and take actions individually while remaining socially coordinated. In a changing, or unstable context, social behavior attempts to construct a shared definition of the situation which will again enable individuals to orient their behavior collectively.

From this perspective, there are important questions to be asked when an organization undertakes a program to intentionally bring about cultural change. How do the objectives of the program become incorporated into the organization's culture as an altered set of taken-for-granted values, beliefs and assumptions? How do behaviors which are exhibited in the context of program become part of the day-to-day behavior in the larger organization?

Methodology

The data reported in this paper were gathered through a participant observation design. A field researcher traveled with two of the three programs and had access to all the activities that took place. Overt participation in the program by the observer was minimal. (A more complete description of the observer's role has been presented in ARL Inquiry, 1995.) Extensive field notes were taken throughout the two programs observed. Many "opportunistic interviews"-- discussion with participants --were held. Seventy-one formal interviews were conducted throughout the company. These interviews included participants in all three programs, managers and individual contributors throughout the organization who did not attend the program but who work for those who did attend, and three members of the executive team.

Throughout the field research, the field worker met regularly with the ARL™Inquiry research team to review the data being gathered and discuss next steps. Following the close of the final program, the team began coding data and inductively building theory. The model presented below was developed by Nilson as part of this theory building process.

Components of Cultural Change

Analysis of the available data suggest four components of culture change. The first, *Exhibiting*, is when new behaviors, values, and attitudes, which reflect participation in the intervention, appear in the everyday work behavior of the organization's members. The second component, *Symbolizing*, occurs when events and behaviors are given meaning and made communicable among organization members. The third component, *Sanctioning*, means that members receive peer, and possibly organizational, support and reinforcement for exhibiting these attitudes, values, behaviors. The fourth component, *Reinforcing and Refining*, refers to individuals reviewing and refining the new values and behaviors within a group or network of change participants. These four process components--Exhibiting, Defining, Sanctioning, and Reinforcing and Refining--are presented as a theoretical model pertaining to the incorporation of change into an organization's culture by way of the social interaction of its members.

Exhibiting The first change component, *Exhibiting*, is that desired new behaviors become known and accepted among members of the organization. The intervention under study consisted of an executive training program that would utilize ARL to develop interaction skills and values in addition to globalization. Therefore, it was necessary to look for evidence of both globalization and these new interaction skills and perspectives. One early indication of globalization occuring outside of the intervention setting came when a marketing and communication task force began organizing joint presentations for industrial trade shows, replacing previous practices of individual company competition. Another is reflected in changes in interpersonal communication following

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participation in the intervention experience. Consider the following comments made by a participant in the program and typical of many such comments.

> When you go through (the intervention) its the idea of a shared adversity creating a bond between people...certainly all of us have a more intimate relationship in the business sense with each other...That kind of intimacy, I guess it's based on trust, you're more open and more direct, and has great benefits in communication with the organization. The ability to pick up the phone to talk to someone you haven't talked to in six months...you are immediately at a higher level of communication than you would be if it was just a person you happen to know on a functional basis through the organization...I've seen and experienced the benefits of that...and there's a lot of people who were involved in a project and came out to our facility. It would have never have happened if there hadn't been communication, if it had just been between managers. We provided a lot of assistance to them, knowing full well that this doesn't benefit the profit and loss statement of my business unit. It's a (global organization) project.

The respondent's comments illustrated what we conclude about the level of trust and interpersonal knowledge gained as a result of participating in the intervention. This gain influenced the subsequent likelihood of interaction taking place between different members and companies within this organization. Other individuals who were not a part of the intervention directly have started participating in events in which they cross organizational boundaries that they would not have previously crossed. Most importantly, we learn that this changed behavior is not driven by previously existing values and norms, ie. potential for profit to one's own company, but by the introduction of a new way of defining these events as global organization events.

As a result of participating in the intervention, people began viewing direct interpersonal comunication and cooperation between members of the various operating companies as behavior that now defines the way members of the organization handle problems and conduct business. Their behavior exhibited these changed values. That members recognized this behavior change is reflected in the following interview which is illustrative of comments from members of the organization in all parts of the company.

> I guess the biggest impact I've seen has been the fact that we definitely seem to have become one company...(prior to the intervention)...trying to get information...was difficult....I've seen 100%improvement, and it's even better than probably 100%. ...like if I have a problem or question that someone they know... in (a different part of the company) has a solution to that, I don't see any barriers to me being able to call that person up and getting that information. Two years ago, it didn't happen. We tried and you couldn't do it.

To some extent, globalization, as a perspective, meant interacting and cooperating across boundaries that had traditionally separated departments, divisions, companies, and individuals. Cooperation across traditional boundaries was exhibited and recognized as a new corporate value. This cooperation was repeatedly mentioned in interviews, such as the comment reported below:

> A lot of the underlying themes (in the program) were teamwork and trust and building relationships and re-defining the organization from a departmental mode where you're narrowly focused on how that department performs versus how the overall (profit and loss) is affected. That was another theme. And I think all those themes apply to the company whether you look at it globally or locally.

Symbolizing The second culture change component is that new behaviors, attitudes and values are given meaning and made communicable among these members. There are two ways in which this might be expected to be found. Members of an organization might develop their own jargon in reference to the intervention, or some aspect of it, or they might begin using terms that they learned as a part of the intervention for behaviors being brought into the everyday workplace. During early observations of the second program the observer noted participants initially making comments about having seen participants from the first program return appearing

to have been through some sort of almost religious conversion experience. This way of putting it seemed to express participants' skepticism and conservative fears that personal changes would be expected by them by the program staff. In effect, they were defining the intervention as a threat to the existing culture. However, further into the intervention, the field observer's recorded notes report one of the interviewees who was particularly supportive of the program using the spiritual conversion jargon to symbolize his own position. He said he"...felt (like a) born-again Christian"

It was interesting to observe that such references to spiritual conversion died out and did not reappear in subsequent programs, and that there was less expression of doubt or fear about the nature or expected benefits to be derived by participating in the intervention, although resistence still existed on the part of some participants. Adoption of the principles of the intervention grew and changed, as did the ways in which organizational members defined and symbolized the event.

Symbols that were carried directly from the intervention experience and were used to communicate the intervention-based values and practices came mostly from techniques introduced in the intervention. One interviewee commented that "...It's generated a bit of a language that has helped...recognize situations."

One of the techniques taught in the intervention was called "Reflection and Dialogue", or, as it is commonly referred to in the company, "R&D". This technique was often discussed or referred to by interviewees like the one below:

> R&D. It's a means of getting expectations out on the table in a non-judgmental way. I had a meeting with my financial team, and I said, before we start, I want to get expectations, what are everybody's expectations...

Sanctioning The third culture change component is that members give and receive mutual support and reinforcement for exhibiting the new cultural behaviors. In the following situation, described in an interview, a technique taught in the program called "Stop-and-reflect" was invoked by a senior executive.

> I was... meeting with (a member of the executive committee). I got a little excited, he got a little excited. And then he said, "Oh, let's do a stop and reflect. Let's take five minutes right now, where we are here. I thought, that's neat. ...Came back in, five minutes later...and found that there really wasn't as many issues as we thought there were and we got to some closure pretty quickly. He never would have done that a year before.

Support can come from modeling a desired behavior, as well as from making positive comments about it, or sharing in an event in which the new behavior is used and the event is recognized as having gone better than previously. Support through modeling is particularly important when it comes from superiors, and, since the participants in the ARL programs were high-level executives, their use of new behaviors can be assumed to carry a generally supportive effect for those working under them. In one surprise episode, sanctioning emerged because of what participants considered inappropriate old culture behavior. During the presentation of recommendations at the conclusion of the first program the members of the Executive Committee were confronted for their behavior by program participants, and subsequently gave support to these new norms themselves. As the event was described by one participant:

> I'm sitting around that circle when this event happened and it was just like...somebody farting loudly in church. It was such inappropriate behavior, and then I thought, boy, I guess my consciousness has been changed, because I wouldn't have noticed this six months ago. ...(W)e had a group of twenty people who are really sensitive of how the other person felt, how they talked, listening. All this kind of stuff and they brought these bulls back into the china shop and they went back to the old, duke-it-out-at-the, across the boardroom kind of crap and it just offended everybody.

As a result of the above incident, the senior executives made it clear that they wanted to learn what new behavioral norms were now in place themselves, and one of the senior executives immediately sanctioned a local version of the program in his operating company.

In another interview, a respondent reported his own changed feelings and behaviors as

a sanctioning interpretation of the organization's new activities.

> I feel more comfortable expressing myself among my superiors in particular than I used to. And I guess part of my source of strength or confidence in doing that is being able to look back at the (program) and say, "Look, this is what the company said they wanted to do, and if they're really serious about it, then they're not going to think I'm coming out of left field when I say these things."

This respondent also reported observations of changes in the behaviors of other executives who went through the intervention, and gave some recognition of a conscious effort to model, and thus sanction, the new desired behaviors.

> Individuals I think have changed. I've seen VP's here, I can mention names since it's you and I talking... (a VP) has done a really good job of taking to heart the teachings of the program. In trying to, in becoming a more sensitive manager, I think (another VP) has some good work and things like that. I'm more outspoken and I'm more myself within the company.

Reinforcing and Refining The fourth culture change component is that individuals who share the behaviors and their social meanings review and refine them within a group or network of change participants. The importance of this sharing is reflected in the following comments made in interviews that are illustrative of numerous such statements made by others.

> I think [as] more and more people get involved with the (ARL program) it makes a difference. In the beginning it was very difficult to say, "Let's have some reflection." Now the number of people who know reflection is growing.

> ...there are informal groups formed because of the local (program)...people sit together with the finance guy and the production guy and say that this is not the way it should go and let's do something about it. We sit together and try to define some sort of strategy because going one step higher doesn't make any sense. That is not where the change is coming from. You might say to the level above that group that there wasn't any change coming or it was delayed or postponed or you have to wait, etc., etc. So now some things are moving and because there are more people involved the groups are getting bigger and there is more disciples within the organization who have the same ideas and same feelings.

The importance of this component is also seen in observations by participants' reflecting its absence. The following comment is by a participant who embraced the program but worked in a location remote from other participants:

> You know, I really haven't done very much of that (reflection and dialogue with my people)... I don't know whether I have a hesitation to do it simply because of the fact that I was the only person there who could do it.

Conclusions

The organizational cultural change observed in this company resulted from an ARL program that offered high-level executives the opportunity of learning through experience. The overt thrust of this program was to generate globalism as a part of the organization's culture. Additional thrusts of the program focused on creating an environment in which participating executives could learn behaviors and perspectives that would foster and utilize trust, cooperativeness and communication among the various companies making up this multi-national organization. Although our analysis is still in the initial stages, we conclude that the impact of the program on participants was generally positive and at times dramatic. However, the cultural change took time to start and spread.

Initial reactions were hesitant, and met with skepticism in the larger organization. Participants in the first program were defined as having experienced a religous-like conversion. However, as

additional programs were implemented, participation was redefined positively. Participants began modeling the techniques they had learned, and exhibiting the changed values they had acquired as a result of the intervention experience. These changed attitudes and behaviors were symbolized by reference to named events and techniques, providing a special language to share and diffuse the intervention change into the existing culture. The diffusion of the change was reinforced by opportunities to discuss and use the new attitudes and behaviors among those who shared experience of participation in the program and common language it fostered. Acceptance of the change was further reinforced by the modeling and sanctioning of change behaviors on the part of others, especially management. Additional events patterned after the original program further exhibited and sanctioned the change, possibly tailoring the changes to the felt needs of the organizational participants sponsoring and participating in them. The dynamics of change drawn from the observational and interview data are expressed as four culture change components: exhibiting; symbolizing; sanctioning; and, reinforcing and refining. This model is summarized in table 1.

Implications

Results of this study indicate that new values and behaviors are introduced into the organization by individuals who can model and communicate the desired changes in existing everyday situations. Furthermore, the utility and efficacy of such practices is weighed and communicated as part of the social change process.

Several implications from these observations seem evident. The desired change should be readily communicable. This may suggest the popularity, and success, of training programs which incorporate easy-to-phrase, remember, and communicate principles. At the same time, it is important not to overlook the ability of participants in a training intervention to arrive at suitable means of constructing, naming and communicating new principles in ways best suited to their own organization.

TABLE 1. Culture Change Model Showing Change Components And Effects

COMPONENT	DEFINITION	EFFECTS
EXHIBITING	Introducing new values & behaviors into everyday practices	Diffuses learned perspectives and behaviors into existing cultural context
SYMBOLIZING	Naming and defining new values & behaviors in terms of organizational implications and acceptance	Makes communication of new values and behaviors, together with their organizational significance, feasible
SANCTIONING	Modeling of new values & behaviors by organizational leaders and members, and attributing positive results to their use	Incorporates new culture components within the reward structure of the organization
REINFORCING and REFINING	Repeated expression and use of new values & behaviors, with possible modification to fit the organization's needs	Maintains and furthers accepted use of components, and uniquely adapts them to the organization

Second, the desired change must be usable within the context of everyday work situations, and its appropriateness and reward must be demonstrated and made frequent. The proving ground for an intervention is in the everyday workplace and within everyday interaction, not aside from it. Training programs often end at the close of the formal sessions, but results of this study indicate that, while personal change may take place within the sessions, organizational change takes place outside of them. Interventions intended to result in cultural change need to be designed such that the desired changes can take place in actual everyday practice and within the social context of everyday behavior.

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A Study of the Role of Learning Advisors in Action Learning

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Learning advisors play a crucial role in helping individuals learn through Action Learning. This study searches out the inherent wisdom of practitioners to better understand what learning advisors do and why they do it. This paper reports on the first phase of that research in which some of the external and internal influences on a learning advisor are examined.

In order to deal with an environment of change and uncertainty, individuals and organizations have begun to experiment with forms of working and organizing that call for a fundamental reassessment of the role of learning. One of the keys to successfully dealing with continuous change is the ability to learn how to learn from, and during, experience (Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Action Learning (AL) is a process that can be used to help individuals acquire these new learning skills.

This paper reports on the first phase of an ongoing research project that is examining the role of the learning advisor in AL programs. I will first describe AL and the role of the learning advisor as conceived from the literature. I will next discuss the research itself and the methodology being used, and then report on the results of the study of the external and internal influences on the role of the learning advisor.

Action Learning and the Role of the Learning Advisor

AL originates from the work of Reg Revans (1982) and is defined by Pedler as:

> "... an approach to the development of people in organizations which takes the task as the vehicle for learning. It is based on the premise that there is no learning without action and no sober and deliberate action without learning. ... Action Learning implies both self-development and organization development. Action on a problem changes both the problem and the person acting upon it. It proceeds particularly by questioning taken-for-granted knowledge" (1991, p. xxii-xxiii).

The design of an AL program takes many shapes (Noel & Charan, 1988; O'Neil & Marsick, 1994; Pedler, 1991). AL may be used within an organization to address individual or organizational problems and, in some cases, to help bring about organizational change. It may be used within a university setting to enable individuals to earn degrees through research, investigation and action on individual or organizational issues. AL is also used in community settings to address individual and societal issues. Programs vary in design, i.e., the number of groups, the number of days groups meet together, the duration of the program, and the integration of formal and informal instruction.

In each case, participants work in small groups on a problem of importance to themselves as individuals, or of strategic importance to their organization. In some groups, each individual addresses his/her own problem - either personal or organizational; while in other groups, the group as a whole addresses the same problem originating either from their own organization or, in some cases, another organization. During their work on the problem, individuals learn how to learn, learn to think critically, and develop their own theories of working and living that are tested against real world experience and established tenets (Marsick and others, 1992). In this process, participants are assisted by a learning advisor.

The role of the learning advisor is considered important and central to AL by many authors (Casey, 1991; Marsick, 1990; MacNamara and Weekes, 1982; McGill & Beaty, 1992; Mumford, 1993). There is some disagreement as to whether or not the learning advisor is always required. Revans (1991) thinks that the learning advisor role may be limited to the start of the

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program to ensure that participants understand that they have the latent ability to learn from one another, but that the ongoing support of the advisor is unnecessary. Most AL practitioners, however, see the role as both necessary and appropriate.

According to the literature, the learning advisor plays many roles (Casey, 1991; Harries, 1991; Marsick, 1990; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; McGill & Beaty, 1992; O'Neil & Marsick, 1994; Pedler, 1991). These roles can include that of a supporter, a teacher, a reflector, a challenger, a questioner and a mirror of the group's values, expectations, norms and beliefs. What roles are played, and when, and how, these roles are played out is the subject of this research.

Research and Methodology

The current literature on the role of the learning advisor is primarily presented as prescriptions, written from the personal experience of practitioners (Casey, 1991; McGill and Beaty, 1992; Mumford, 1993; Pedler, 1991). The problem is that we don't have any documented wisdom of practitioners to help us better understand what learning advisors do and why they do it; what learning advisors say they do and what they actually do; and what they think is distinctive about their role in helping individuals learn how to learn.

This study looks to build on the literature by identifying themes from the work and words of practitioners, and from those themes begin to develop principles and theories that will be useful in practice. This paper reports on the first phase of this research that looks at the external and internal influences that help to shape what the learning advisor does.

This is a modified phenomenological study that triangulates the results of interviews and observations. The subjects include 25 practicing AL learning advisors in the United States, Sweden and England. The observation sites are a multi-national food organization in the United States using an AL program to help transform itself into a global organization; and a university in England using AL as a basis for its masters and doctoral programs geared to people working within varied organizational settings. I have performed a deductive analysis of what these experts explicitly say about their practice, along with an inductive analysis of the interviews and observations, to begin to identify implicit themes.

External and Internal Influences on Learning Advisors

In this first phase of the research, I have looked at those forces that appear to begin to shape the roles that the learning advisor plays in an AL program, and some of the ways in which learning advisors start to attribute meaning to those roles. These external and internal influences indicate possible differentiators in the way different learning advisors practice.

External Influences Some of the external factors that appear to influence the roles of a learning advisor in a particular program, and the way in which those roles may be practiced, starts with a consideration of the background and earlier work of the advisor. Other factors include the external (to the program) pressures of the environment in which the program is being run, i.e., organization, university, community; and the design of the program itself. The last factor to be discussed is the needs and attitudes of the participants in the program.

Background and Early Work The literature indicates that learning advisors come from varied backgrounds (Casey, 1991; Harries, 1991; Pedler, 1991; Turner, Lotz and Cederholm, 1993) and findings from the research confirm that observation. There are certain areas, however, that appear in advisors' backgrounds with a degree of frequency. The most named experience is with training, and/or work with groups.

"They obviously have to be interested in groups and how groups behave."

" ... experience in group and interpersonal skills ... managing group process ... ."

Advisors frequently cite Tavistock experience, National Training Laboratory and Gestalt training as being influential in their current work. This earlier background of working with groups has an obvious connection with the group design in AL. Some of the advisors have also indicated that they find the work with groups in AL a more meaningful way of working since they go "below the process level, to the learning level".

A second background area that comes up with regularity and helps shape the way the advisor practices is an interest in systems theory.

> "I use a systems model when I work."
>
> "I have a combination of psychoanalysis and systems theory. ... I tend to think in systems and look upon the AL group as a system and then do systems interventions. ... I use the triangle to try to help them focus on each other in relationship to each other and the system and the topic."

The frequency of advisors with systems theory in their background may tie in with the aspect of using AL to help individuals and organizations learn to deal with constant change. Senge (1991) makes the point that systemic thinking is needed to understand change, so a background in systems theory would appear to be useful to an AL learning advisor.

External Pressures in the Environment The 2 environments the learning advisors were most familiar with were organizations and universities. It was within organizational settings that advisors appeared to most often encounter pressures that impacted how they practiced. Both the literature (McGill & Beaty, 1992; Pedler, 1991), and the learning advisors suggest that AL works best when the participants are able to meet regularly over an extended period of time. This allows for the action and reflection that is an integral part of the learning process. It is often the case, however, in programs within organizational settings that time is at a premium, and as a result the work of the learning advisor is impacted.

> "They are in 15 days. We had 18 days with ... because that was considered a special program. He fought for those days. And I think that's good. I think it takes 20 days for you to do a good job. But you can do a good job also in the shorter time."
>
> "It's a mixed dilemma because if you wait until they need it (just in time learning) it's the end of the program. ... it gets speeded up."

Programs within organizations also pose other pressures that impact the work of the advisor. AL is sometimes used to help bring about organizational change (ARL ™ Inquiry, 1995). Some advisors feel that the pressure to effect this kind of change can create obstacles to the group's learning and the advisor's role needs to take those obstacles into account.

> "An obstacle could be the host (the project owner). The host puts pressure on the project group. ... And I have to be the rule of the group then, to give them the authority, let them take their authority in the project."
>
> "I'm not in favor of using programs like ours to implement strategy from the top down because if that's the contract, we don't have the freedom to debate and problemitize."

On the other hand, "university programs may be different because we don't have some of the same external pressures." University programs are geared towards participants using AL to investigate and research their own, or their organizations, problem - not only to learn and solve the problem, but as a means to earning a degree. The time frames are dictated by university requirements, as opposed to organizational, and any other pressures are generated primarily by the participants. As a result, the role of the learning advisor in a university is not as impacted by the same kind of external pressures that an organization might exert.

Program Design As stated earlier, there are many different AL program designs. There are 2 design factors that are frequently cited by advisors that impact the way in which they carry out their role. The first is the difference when the participants are dealing with individual problems, either their own or their organization's; or when the group is focusing as a whole on one, usually an organizational, problem.

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"There is a difference in an advisor in a program in a company in which there was a team project, an advisor in a program in which there were individual projects either in the same or different companies, and an advisor for a group of individuals doing their own projects or addressing current real problems."

"It is also different from facilitating with a group with a project than when they bring their own problems, because then you've got all sorts of other issues."

Revans (1982) emphasizes that one of the strengths of AL is recognized ignorance, which results in "questioning insight - Q insight", not "previously programmed, or P" knowledge. Some AL programs are designed, however, with pre-set "P" training modules built in, and/or the expectation that learning advisors will provide just in time learning as groups express or demonstrate needs. This design is often found in programs that are intended to help bring about organizational change (ARL ™ Inquiry, 1995; O'Neil & Marsick, 1994). The design strongly influences the teaching role the advisor plays. Some advisors see this as a natural role, while others are discomforted by it as they see it as a contradiction to one of the basic principles of AL.

"I want the advisor to show up in the program and give some of their experience some of their theory ... ."

" ... I can act as a facilitator of information for them. More often then not direct it, but sometimes, particularly if it's a group of managers who are very scattered, to actually get it to them."

"I need to be strongly convinced (about just in time learning). ... I think that it's a trap, very seductive."

Needs and Attitudes of Participants The education and preparation of participants, or lack thereof, prior to their engagement in an AL program has an impact on the learning advisor. Many advisors make use of some form of a pre-program orientation. Participation in the program needs to be voluntary and it is useful for participants to have a basic understanding of the AL process.

"If I have a group that wants to be there ... I don't have to do any task stuff."

"I least like having to feel responsible for making it work, doing all the organizing, having to push people ... terrible trap get into from time to time. ... depends on the way the program is set up or people's attitude in the group."

Internal Influences Based on their background, values and attitudes, it appears that learning advisors create different meanings around their roles in AL that serve to frame much of their interaction with their groups. These meanings can be interpreted as a "consecrated self", a "mystery maker" and a "radical advisor".

Consecrated Self For many learning advisors, there appears to be an underlying current of spirituality to their work. This spirituality sometimes seems to come from the impact of an influential other, and in other cases from a view of what is crucial to be successful in the work.

As some learning advisors discuss their view of their roles, they make explicit religious connections. These connections impact the way in which they view themselves and the role they play as learning advisors. In some situations, the view of their work as a vocation conflicts with the reality of doing the work of a learning advisor for pay, and results in anxiety.

"Revans precursors often religious figures or moral philosophers ... Revans talks about the soul of the individual person, the salvation ... . That influences me."

" ... servants seeking service rather than 'I have something you can buy from me'. People who are making a living may be troubled by it."

In other cases, as they discuss their actual work and describe their connections to values and the need to submerge their needs to that of the participant, there are sometimes more implicit spiritual connotations that can be drawn.

"There is a link to values ... all have a particular anchor."
"I identify with my principles ... what I do and what I am I can't separate."
"First of all I would look for someone who is not too egotistical, somebody who is prepared to subordinate his needs to the needs of the group."

Mystery Maker There are learning advisors who try to create a mystery about what they do. In doing so, they create a situation in which the focus is on themselves rather than the group. The group may be getting something out of the work, but the advisor is too, contrary to what should be happening in an AL program. Some advisors are explicit in expressing this "mystery".

"It's not possible to describe what I do."
"That the group is not at all clear at the beginning what it is, why is this fellow here."

Others seem to be less aware that they mystify their role and sometimes struggle to be more explicit.

"I can't explain how I decide (on an intervention)."
"I could say that it's intuitive (decision to make an intervention). But I suppose it isn't."

Being a mystery maker is the role most criticized by other learning advisors. It is one of the most frequently identified "taboos" among advisors. In response to questions about taboos and obstacles in their work, advisors reply:

"Bringing themselves (the advisors) in. 'I am important. Can you see me?'."
"Pursuing your own ambitions ... too much focus on yourself and your own interests ... can't separate out the group's needs."
" ... Revans' admonition about consultants ... taking over the process and making it about them."

Although most learning advisors recognize the inappropriateness of the group focusing on the advisor rather than the participants, many struggle with trying to avoid being a mystery maker themselves. There appears to be a natural inclination to be more involved than is viewed as beneficial to the group, but most advisors recognize this as a problem and work to avoid it.

"I have a need for feedback that I need to suppress."
" ... a bit of showbiz ... can get away with that because I'm the bloody advisor. It doesn't do you any good in the long run because it increases their dependency on you."
"I find that because I'm, one of my weaknesses, because I've been trained partly as a consultant, if I'm not careful, the role I get into is helping them solve problems."

Radical Advisor One of the key values in AL is that of empowerment. According to McGill and Beaty:

"We believe that action learning is of use far beyond its present boundaries and that it offers a democratic, liberating experience of learning to those who would try it. ... Action Learning is empowering because it starts and ends with the individual and their project, making a necessary and direct link between thought and behaviour, theory and practice, reflection and action" (1992, p. 31-32).

Some learning advisors interpret a significant part of their role as enabling the AL participants to use this empowerment to question and challenge authority. Their view of AL appears to fit more of a radical mindset than one of strictly development within the approved paradigm. In some cases, advisors speak of experiences in their lives that helped form their views around the importance of this role.

"A powerful influence ... there are certain traditions of liberal, democratic adult education which I had never found anywhere else ... this is dealing with adults and assuming their knowledge is as important as yours and not privileging your own knowledge."

Other advisors use terms like courage, opposition to authority, unconventional, and freedom, to describe what makes them feel that their work with the group has been successful or fulfilling. In response to a request to describe a successful intervention advisors reply:

" ... (the group has) shown some courage to oppose authority. One of the main purposes is the way people handle authority ... when I see people with the courage to do something unconventional."
" (I tell the group) ... You are not going to succeed as you usually do. You don't have to. ... What I'm trying to tell them is now you have a chance to do something for yourself."
"I have a long talk with the client and ask him if he wants to give them freedom to act. ... And I tell him that I want my group to really do whatever they want that is best for them and not for him."

Significance and Future of the Research

As the developmental needs of individuals and organizations change as the result of our continuously changing environment, human resource professionals will also need to change their support of these individuals and organizations from some of the more traditional models of development that have been successful in the past. AL appears to hold a promise to be a process that may be able to meet these continuous development needs (ARL ™ Inquiry, 1995; Weinstein, 1995). The results of this study will help the human resource professional better understand the critical role of the learning advisor in AL, and other similar developmental learning processes, and enable them to better prepare individuals to perform this role.

I believe this first phase of the research provides insight into two areas; the impact of program design on the work of the learning advisor, and considerations for choices of individuals to fulfill the role. When a program is designed for an organization, there are pressures from the organization that can serve to dictate the design. Since these pressures cannot always be alleviated, it is important that the objectives of the program, and the role of the learning advisor in meeting those objectives, be explicitly planned and discussed so that the role is clear to all involved with the program.

The results also provide some input into the selection of individuals for the learning advisor role. Training and/or experience in group interaction and process, in general, appears to be carry over to working with AL groups. Systems theory, while not mentioned as frequently, seems to be particularly useful for AL programs within organizations. From a less formalistic, but perhaps even more important, perspective, is selecting someone with a maturity that comes from not having to be the center of attention, but a maturity that enables them to instead focus on the needs, particularly learning needs, of others.

The next phases of the research will look more closely at the specific ways in which the learning advisor fulfills his/her various roles in AL programs. Of particular interest will be a look at what the learning advisors say they do and what they actually do in practice; and if there are differences, what the causes of those differences may be.

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